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The participation of family farmers in the 'territorial sustainable rural development' program in Brazil: Trajectories, projects, networks

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Abstract

The communication's case study deals with the trajectories of Brazilian family farmers of Aguas Emendadas territory (Federal District) in participative procedures and the effects of this participation device proposed by Agrarian Development Ministry among the PDSTR (Sustainable Development Program of Rural territories). The social and political resources distribute very unevenly the chances of family farmers to integrate and stay in participation procedures. The legitimacy of the participants of the rural "civil society" is based on three main elements: their capacity to represent farmers' communities; their institutional activism: negotiations and formalization with public administration technicians and officials in order to select "good" policy projects; the dominion of the expertise. However, we observe the appearance of sector-based "elite of the participation" among family farmer. To conclude, this participative policy making constitutes an hybridization between several models of public action and between several political practices of participation.

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The case of the Territory *Aguas Emendadas*

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This case study is indeed interested in the trajectories of the family farmers in participative procedures of "territorial and sustainable rural development planning" in Brazil (example of *Aguas Amendadas* territory which includes 11 *municipes* and 10 administrative sectors, and distributed on three states of which the Federal District). This territory is characterized by the Federal District urbanization and by the recession of the agricultural areas. This last point is not without consequences on the 'advocating' of the commitment, the activists trajectories of the farmers and their sociological characteristics. This communication presents the results of several years of researches with the actors of the Territory *Aguas Emendadas*.

This proposal deals with three points that characterize participation process: 1/ the continuum of the behaviors and repertoires of several types of political participation 2/ the "multi-commitments" of participants 3/ the territorial rooting of participation. Moreover, this contribution is crossing analysis of the participation process and analysis of territorialized public action.

Having described briefly the specificity of the territorial and participative devices of rural development and their recent evolutions in Brazil (1), this communication will present a typology of the farmers committed in the participative procedures from the criteria of their activist trajectories (accumulations and complementarities of experiences and commitments and disengagements) and of their sociological characteristics, largely connected to the specificity of the territory *Aguas Emendadas* (2). We will end with an analysis of the effects of representatives' participation of the "civil society" on the public action (3).

1/A territorialized rural development policy in favour of family farming sector was born from 2004 in Brazil. It's based on three principles: i) federal planning declined with soft law tools; ii) territorialization of *intermunicipal*, or even federal inter-states, projects; and iii) participation of the actors of the rural development.

2/This communication will insist on the necessity to accumulate several tools to observation participation process :

a/ trajectories and resources of the participants: partisan, farmers community, professional and labor-union militancy, their social and professional resources in terms of cultural and social capital and of networks.

b/ A sociology of policy projects setting allows to re-place the participative variable in the more including context of policy projects coalitions (for example: biological market of the federal District). Methodically, the approach was double: on one hand recompose the policy networks, on the other hand observe practices of projects formatting, negotiations, transactional and joint actions. This methodology was indispensable: first, to estimate the capacity of the participative "arenas" to fit into wider power relations of the territory; second,

to reveal the crossing between classic strategies and practices to catch public financial resources for projects on one hand and the new resources brought by institutionalized procedures of participation. Concretely, these participants indeed implement practices of "institutional militancy" within a decision making network of territorialized and sector-based policy, decisions that will be finally confirmed by participative territorial councils.

This approach allowed to built a typology of the participants which authorizes to believe that the understanding of the participative process is necessarily based on analytical crossing between direct participation and the other types of political participation (partisan, syndical, social movements...) and the resources which they allow the actors to accumulate.

3/ The effects of this participation device are plural. In the first place, the observations confirm reports made besides by many other worldwide researches: 1) the social and political resources distribute very unevenly the chances of integration in participation process to the detriment of the main policy targeted beneficiaries: in this case the family farmers; 2) the presence of process of selection; 3) the "representation effect" of participative democracy: the legitimacy of the participants of the rural "civil society" is based on their capacity to represent farmers' communities; 4) the dominion of the expertise (in this case the agronomists/ technicians and/or the technicians of the financial cogs); 5/ However, it will be also shown that one of the effects maybe, in certain conditions, the appearance of a family farmer "elite of the participation" who do not hesitate, for some, to use participation device as a launch pad towards... politics.

Finally, the study shows that the participative procedures leave a wide place, even strengthen, one of the very classic phenomena of policy making premises: the emergence of sector-based leaders-relay who act between representation of particular interests (farmers' communities), institutional militancy to public resources, negotiations with the technicians and officials to select "good" policy projects and to formalize and formatting their technicality, including financial, while taking into account in them strategies of the imperatives of new participative cogs of this territorialized and participative ('territorial sustainable rural development' program) policy tool.

The policy making is then looking like an hybridization between several models of public action and between several political practices of participation (political ones, institutional and professional militancy, community representation, entrance to political market...).